

Director's report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission
presented by Jeffrey Koenings, Ph.D., WDFW Director
December 3, 2004

A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

GOAL I: HEALTHY AND DIVERSE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS DEVELOP, INTEGRATE AND DISSEMINATE SOUND FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT SCIENCE.

Sturgeon Tour in Lower Columbia Gorge: Two sturgeon scientists from the Republic of Georgia are visiting the United States for the purpose of observing sturgeon aquaculture and management methods across the United States. The Republic of Georgia (formerly the Soviet Union) is reliant on hydropower and therefore the visiting scientists are especially interested in sturgeon research associated with Bonneville Dam. The visit is part of a Cochran Fellowship exchange occurring through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is being coordinated by the P'Chelle International organization located out of Kennewick Washington. The two scientists are visiting sturgeon aquaculture and research facilities across the United States. In addition to the tour of the Bonneville Dam area, the visit has included stops in Florida, the mid-west, and California.

Staff biologists from the Oregon and Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife led the scientists on a tour of facilities and fisheries located near Bonneville Dam. The tour began on November 18th with visits to the sturgeon pond at ODFW's Bonneville Hatchery, the fish passage visitor center at Bonneville Dam, recreational anglers fishing for sturgeon just below Bonneville Dam, and WDFW's Region 5 office in Vancouver, Washington. The tour concluded on November 19th with a visit to a private sturgeon hatchery being operated at Troutdale, Oregon. This visit provided a unique opportunity to foster cooperation and an exchange of ideas and methodologies concerning sturgeon research.

Bull Trout Protocols: The WDFW biometrics unit is working with bull trout biologists to develop an improved protocol for determining the presence or absence of bull trout juveniles. Over the past few years, a protocol for detecting bull trout juveniles has been under development. Because detection methods are not 100 percent accurate, it is possible to survey for bull trout and find none even though some were there. Current protocol developments attempt to tie sample size requirements to actual juvenile bull trout density. The interpretation of finding no

bull trout with this approach is not that the bull trout weren't there, but that the surveyors were unlucky because the sample size guidelines assured a reasonable probability of finding the ones that were there. The WDFW biometrics unit is working with bull trout biologists to develop an improved approach of setting sample sizes based on a threshold related to the density of bull trout that we wish to detect.

Genetic Survey: The much-awaited Genetic Survey by Craig Busack and Ken Currens (NWIFC) was at last completed last week and made available to about 25 experts. The survey is intended to capture expert opinion on several aspects of the genetic risk of hatchery operations, particularly domestication. Survey answers, expected in early December, will be used to parameterize the genetic risk models Craig and Ken are developing. We expect the results to be widely applicable, and an important step forward in the understanding of genetic risks.

Stream Dynamics and Stream Restoration Research: Al Wald is developing preliminary surveys for analysis of hydrologic effects of beaver colonization in degraded stream systems. Initial field surveys will include documentation of streamflow, channel conditions, soil moisture, vegetation, and fish use in sites with active beaver colonization. Dr. Michael Pollock, NOAA Fisheries, has expressed interest in the study and may assist in literature review and data analyses.

Research Paper: accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journal: Hunter, MA, T. Quinn, and MP Hayes. In Press. Low Flow Spatial Characteristics in Forested Headwater Channels of Southwest Washington. Journal of the American Water Resources Association.

Mountain Goat Research: Staff captured 2 mountain goats on Liberty Mountain (near Darrington) and on the south side of Lake Chelan; making of total of 20 captures this season. To date, we have made 54 mountain goat captures, including 3 mortalities. Thirty-nine of the captures have been by helicopter darting (with 1 mortality), 11 in the eastern Cascades, 22 in the northwest Cascades, and 6 in the southwest Cascades. Fifteen of the captures have been by ground darting (with 2 mortalities), 5 in the eastern Cascades, 1 in the northwest Cascades, and 9 in the southwest Cascades. Four of the 54 were recaptures to replace collars, which were no longer functioning. We now have 35 functioning collars in the field, 13 in the eastern Cascades, 16 in the northwest Cascades, and 6 in the southwest Cascades. Four animals have died from other causes (including 1 hunter kill).

Initial compilation of sight-ability observations during surveys this summer indicates that we had 60 attempts at sight-ability observations, 28 with ground observers and 32 using collared mountain goats. Of the ground observer attempts, weather prevented the survey once, no mountain goats were seen 6 times, mountain goats were seen, but not during the survey twice, and the position was plotted erroneously once, yielding a total of 18 observations. With collared mountain goats, weather prevented the survey for 8 potential observations, the collared mountain

goat was outside the survey blocks 3 times, and the collared mountain goat could not be located after the survey once, yielding a total of 20 observations. Fifty percent of the mountain goat groups watched by ground observers were seen during the surveys, while 90% of the collared mountain goats were seen. Initial analysis indicates sight ability was influenced by group size, terrain obstruction, and vegetative obstruction.

Project CAT: The first cougar of the 2004-05 season was captured on Friday, November 5, 2004. We received reports of a cougar passing through a residence outside of Cle Elum on Wednesday and Thursday morning. On Thursday we received a call that a neighbor near this location was missing a domestic sheep. Ben Maletzke and Gary Koehler investigated the location of the report, discovered the sheep carcass, and assessed that it might have been killed by a cougar. We placed a live trap at the site, and Friday morning we captured a sub-adult female cougar. We marked the cougar and relocated it southeast about 10 miles from the capture site. The resident did not express concern about the lost sheep, as they were aware that such an incident might occur since cougars were in the vicinity during the previous weeks. We informed Wildlife Enforcement of the incident.

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS): On November 10, Chris Sato, Joe La Tourrette, John Pierce, and Tim Quinn represented WDFW at an all-day workshop in Portland on the monitoring requirements for state CWCS. The meeting was co-hosted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Defenders of Wildlife.

Also attending were representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Natural Heritage Program, Oregon State University, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Defenders of Wildlife have a contract from the Doris Duke Foundation to help develop a framework for state agencies to use in monitoring landscape-level habitat changes. Their consultants were in attendance and expect to have a report out by the end of 2004. The meeting was very informative. Defenders will provide a summary of the meeting. Joe met with Blanch Sobottke from DNR to explore the possibility of having their agency do the layout and graphic design for the CWCS. Chris met with Elizabeth Rodrick and her staff on November 5 to decide on the mapping requirements for the ecoregional sections of the CWCS. On November 9, Chris and Joe met with Jim Ames from the Fish Program to outline steps to finalize the salmonid portion of the Species of Greatest Conservation Need List.

PROTECT, RESTORE, AND ENHANCE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS.

CWD Regulation Violation: Officers Gerlach and Rogers contacted an Ellensburg resident that brought a harvested mule deer from Colorado into Washington. The hunter attempted to bring the deer into Oregon from Colorado, but the Oregon State Police stopped the hunter and would not allow him to bring the deer into Oregon. The Oregon Trooper advised the hunter he would need to bone out the animal, as required, if the animal was going to be transported through Oregon. The hunter left Oregon and drove north to Idaho and then crossed into Washington from Idaho with the deer still intact in a tarp. The remains of the deer were in a burn pile in the hunter's back yard. The hunter admitted bringing the deer into Washington after talking to the Oregon Trooper about the virus. The hunter advised Officer Gerlach that he had wrapped the deer in a blue plastic tarp to keep it frozen until he got home. Officer Gerlach photographed the deer remains and had the hunter dispose of the deer carcass as required by the emergency regulation. The remains were double bagged in plastic bags and taken to Yakima for disposal at one of the authorized disposal sites.

Invasive Tunicate: On Thursday, November 18th, staff attended a meeting of the Tunicate Response Advisory Group to address issues related to the identification of small colonies of an invasive species of tunicate in Edmonds, Washington: *Didemnum cf. lahillei*. DNA work is being done to positively identify the species found here as the same species found in other areas of the world (e.g. France, New Zealand, East Coast USA) where it has proven to be a very rapid colonizer, and very difficult to eradicate. Attendees included scientists and managers from a multitude of state, federal and local agencies, private companies (shellfish growers included), NGOs, and concerned public (e.g. recreational divers). The Central Shellfish Dive Team was not called on to perform any particular task, but was alerted to the presence of this invasive species.

Hemlock Dam EIS: The United States Forest Service (USFS) is in the process of completing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding Hemlock Dam on the Wind River. The USFS has presented five options concerning the future of this dam that range from no action at all, to improving adult passage at the current structure, to removing the structure completely. The USFS has justified the dam removal options based on the need to recover listed steelhead that pass above Hemlock Dam. The dam, in its current state, creates a shallow reservoir with elevated temperatures and limited flow during the summer months. The decisions reached regarding Hemlock Dam will have an impact on WDFW's fishery monitoring capabilities in the Wind River basin and implications for fishery management in the entire region.

Hemlock Dam provides the unique opportunity to count the total number of adults passing the dam and to estimate smolt production above Hemlock Dam. The governor's salmon recovery office has classified the Wind River as an intensively managed watershed based on the existence of this unique data set. Removal of the existing dam would jeopardize the ability to maintain this data set. WDFW has reviewed the EIS produced by the USFS and is providing comments that under the dam removal options, the adult counts and smolt production estimates need to be

maintained. WDFW is providing two alternatives for maintaining this unique data set and allowing for the removal of Hemlock Dam; 1) the installation of an automated counter with video verification or 2) construction of new monitoring facilities in place of Hemlock Dam.

CWD Carcass Importation: Briggs Hall has received calls regarding two deer killed in Wyoming, which came into the state in violation of the recent commission rules. One incident involved portions of the spinal cord as well as skullcap with small portions of brain tissue still remaining. This case was referred to Region 5 and has been investigated by Enforcement. It is our understanding that these tissues have been incinerated. The second case involved an intact deer head and a carcass, which had been cut in quarters. Biologist Jennifer Brookshier has collected the brain stem from this deer and the sample has been submitted to WSU for analysis. The carcass is under quarantine until the CWD test results are received.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Technical Advisory Committee: Don Larsen attended the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee meeting and received conservation program updates. Conservation financial assistance in the amount of \$26 million was provided to landowners in Washington by NRCS in FY 2004 (not including CRP or CREP). Last year Washington had one of 18 pilot watersheds for the new Conservation Securities Program (CSP) which included wildlife as a program purpose. This year Washington should have approximately 12 watersheds in which landowners are eligible for CSP funds.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Results of the latest CRP signup were announced this week. Washington will add 83,940 acres to the over 1.3 million acres currently enrolled. Counties that have now reached their enrollment cap are Asotin, Douglas, Adams, Walla Walla, Garfield, Klickitat, Benton, and Franklin. The Washington Association of Wheat Growers is hosting a CRP forum in Moses Lake on November 8th to solicit CRP comments from the public on future CRP implementation. The Farm Service Agency's Deputy Administrator responsible for CRP nationwide will be in attendance. More information on the forum can be found at <http://www.wawg.org/>

WDFW Adopt an Access: WDFW Access staff increased the number of WDFW access sites under the Adopt an Access Program this year by seven. These new projects included the following:

Region Three: 2004: Snively Access: Richland Rod and Gun Club

2004: Hyde Access: Tapteal Green-way Association

Region Four: 2004: American Lake: Bills Boathouse, Tillicum Neighborhood Association and Baptist Church, Lakewood Parks and Recreation,

and the American Lake Home Owners Association

2004: Stilliquamish (Lime Quarry) Evergreen Fly Fishing Club

Region Six: 2003: Black River (Gate) Community Club

2004: Lake Nahwatzel Coastal Bass Masters

2004: Black River (Little Rock) Chehalis River Council

WDFW Lands Vision: A rough draft has been completed and will be distributed internally in the next couple of weeks, following additional input from an external focus group and the Fish and Wildlife Commission Habitat Subcommittee. After the internal review the document will be available for public comment.

Walla Walla River Basin (WRIA 32): Irrigation Efficiency Grants Program - Staff reviewed the Lowden Ditch Irrigation Efficiency Grants Program proposal as well as the Borgens Irrigation efficiency project proposal in the Walla Walla River Basin. Water Conservation Commission and Conservation District personnel as well as the landowners were present. The proposed project was significantly revised to place the saved water in Mud Creek rather than the Walla Walla River. The Lowden Ditch project proposal was significantly revised as well and additional review of the extent and validity of the water right is necessary to ensure saved water is placed in trust and the water right is not expanded. At the request of Ecology and the Washington Conservation Commission, staff drafted an assessment of the biological benefit of the Borgens project proposal. Due to recent information regarding water right seniority, the project has been modified to ensure saved water benefits salmonids.

Dalco Passage Oil Spill Resource Damage Assessment Committees Formed: The State's Resource Damage Assessment (RDA) Committee met to develop resource damage assessment strategies. The committee also established three sub-committees: the Shellfish sub-Committee chaired by Department of Health's Bill Cleland, a Recreational Lost Use Sub-committee chaired by Washington State Parks' Chris Regan, and a Natural Resource Losses sub-committee chaired by Department of Fish and Wildlife's Dan Doty. These committees will establish plans for documenting and assessing damages to state resources such that recovery and restoration activities can be identified and implemented. The committee's activities also will be important in the eventuality that a responsible party is identified.

Oiled Wildlife Branch Planning: The Oil Spill Team is working in partnership with the USFWS and USCG to develop a Wildlife Branch Plan that governs wildlife rescue and rehabilitation activities and responsibilities in the Incident Command Post during oil spills. The plan,

developed under the direction of the US Coast Guard's Regional Response Team and Northwest Area Committee, will provide guidance for the management of oiled wildlife response resources during oil spills. The resulting officially sanctioned product will provide specific direction on how oiled wildlife operations will be conducted during oil spills in the Northwest Area Contingency Plan for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Baker River Hydroelectric Project: The settlement agreement for the relicensing of this project has been completed. Director Koenings has signed the agreement. The settlement agreement addresses issues associated with fish passage, wildlife habitat protection, fish propagation, and recreation activities. The agreement will be sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) at the end of November. The FERC will issue a new license prior to the expiration of the current license in April 2006.

Pierce County Biodiversity Network: Pierce County Council passed the Comprehensive Plan amendment (T?20) on 11/09/04. This amendment adopts the Pierce County Biodiversity Network Assessment (completed in August 2004) as a supporting planning document to the Comprehensive Plan. The assessment report provides a detailed analysis of the different Biodiversity Management Areas (BMA), and contains a list of the predicted and confirmed species located within each BMA, and lists recommendations for implementation. This amendment will result in modification to the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan Open Space map to reflect the revised Biodiversity Network.

Deschutes Watershed Center: The Department recently completed another important step towards the development of the Deschutes Watershed Center at Pioneer Park in Tumwater. The SEPA Checklist was completed and along with the "Mitigated Determination of Non-significance," was made available to the public for review and comment.

WDFW proposes to relocate chinook salmon and steelhead trout production from Percival Cove and other locations to a new facility at Pioneer Park and to an upgraded facility at the existing Tumwater Falls Park. Benefits of this relocated production include:

Transfer of fish between basins could be halted, thereby complying with Co-Managers Fish Health Policy

Water quality in Percival Cove and Capitol Lake would be improved, thereby satisfying a Department of Ecology request that WDFW cease fish rearing in Percival Cove by May 30, 2007.

The mitigated checklist provides information to the public and advises how WDFW proposes to reduce impacts of the proposed project.

Search Warrants and Investigation: Detachment 9 (Pierce County) served two search warrants on November 5th following up on investigative leads into a poaching ring stemming from the Spanaway/Buckley area. Undocumented venison, illegal narcotics, and paraphernalia were seized at each location. Additionally, an illegal sawed off shotgun was seized that may tie into a separate closed season elk investigation from several months ago. One of the suspects has an extensive criminal history, including an arrest for armed robbery. Officer Klein was the lead officer in this investigation and did an outstanding job coordinating the activity. Participating officers included Klein, Haw, Prater, Overly, Sergeant Jackson and Captain Brinson.

ENSURE WDFW ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, AND LANDS ARE CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT PROTECT AND RECOVER FISH, WILDLIFE, AND THEIR HABITATS.

Grower's Settlement: WDFW shellfish management staff met with representatives from the Attorney General's Office and the Department of Natural Resources to plan completion of the state's answers to legal interrogatories in the U.S. v. Washington case. The litigation, which will enter federal court in fall of 2005, seeks to resolve the dispute between commercial shellfish growers and affected treaty tribes as to what constitutes a "natural shellfish bed" on privately owned commercial tidelands. Our agency also granted commercial growers (Taylor United) a permit to experimentally collect oysters at the Triton Cove Tidelands in order to estimate the collecting efficiency of harvesters on a natural-set oyster beach. The estimate is crucial to the grower's case, and no oysters will actually be removed from the public beach.

ESA Scientific Research Permits: WDFW - Region 5 submitted to NOAA Fisheries Section 4(d) scientific research approval requests for stock assessment activities including smolt monitoring, adult population monitoring, genetic sampling, presence/absence sampling, and other sampling involving Lower Columbia River ESA listed chinook salmon, chum salmon, and steelhead populations for the 2005 calendar year.

Even though Coho salmon are listed as a candidate species, NOAA Fisheries requested impacts to this species be included in the 2005 application. As part of this submission, WDFW provided estimates of population size, number of fish handled, and mortalities for Section 4(d) authorized activities during calendar year 2004 to NOAA Fisheries for their risk assessment.

Hatcheries Genetic Management Plans: The Hatcheries Assessment group is finalizing their work associated with the 45 Lower Columbia River Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMP's). The HGMP's were posted on our website for 70 days to allow for public comment as part of a settlement agreement. The comment period is over, and we received comments from Washington Trout, Pacificorp, and several private citizens. Our response to these comments, as

well as the comments themselves, will be posted on our website by Wednesday, November 24, 2004. We will also formally submit our HGMP's, the comments, and our response to National Marine Fisheries Service at that time.

Aircraft Emphasis Patrol: Officer Schroeder put together an aircraft emphasis patrol that covered a good portion of Lewis County. Ten Officers were involved in the patrol. With assistance from Officers Brazier, Conklin, Erhardt, and Captain Schlenker, Detachment 4 Officers conducted the spotlighting patrol utilizing the aircraft and the Topo programs in the MDTs. The patrol went very well with numerous contacts, chases, and one great arrest of a local. From the aircraft Sergeant Holden was able to call out the GPS coordinates allowing ground units to converge on the violators. A Longview Daily News reporter accompanied Officer Foster and got some good material for a story on the aircraft patrol. Thank you to all the Officers involved in the emphasis, especially those who assisted from out of the area.

INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS OF OTHERS THAT AFFECT FISH, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS.

EDT Analyses: Thom Johnson participated in a field trip and discussions for applying EDT analyses to Mid-Hood Canal chinook populations. The use of EDT will help to address and improve the certainty regarding several key issues identified in the technical review by the Puget Sound TRT of the Co-managers submission to the Shared Strategy salmon recovery chapter. For example, EDT will 1) help identify which of the VSP parameters are most limiting the recovery of chinook, 2) help identify which habitat-forming processes, if protected or restored, will have the greatest potential to recover chinook, and 3) help provide a description of a habitat recovery strategy complemented with a list of projects designed to recover chinook. Preliminary EDT analyses will be available in mid-December.

Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG): The SRFB 5th funding cycle includes a formula for allocating a first increment of funding to Lead Entities based upon a number of factors, including the number of listed species, miles of marine shoreline, and salmonid river miles. IRM staff revised the Lead Entity GIS coverage to reflect recent changes in some LE boundaries and to correct for inaccuracies in others. This information was provided to Tracy Trole for analysis of the shoreline and salmon river miles. LEAG met to discuss several issues that were raised at the last SRFB meeting. Chairman Ruckelshaus had requested help from LEAG on a range of topics. LEAG devoted significant time on the agenda to discuss these subjects: success measures, best list of projects, project completion, inclusive citizen committees and local government involvement, and the right Lead Entity strategies.

LEAG members had a number of questions about the document presented by the Council of Regions (COR) on recovery plan implementation. Some expressed concerns about the lack of

prior LEAG consultation. Steve Martin and Joel Freudenthal, Snake River and Yakima River Recovery Board representatives, provided useful insights at the LEAG meeting. LEAG discussed each section of the COR proposal. One section that drew a response was the recommendation to combine watershed groups and activities. Some LEAG members stated that the combining of implementation plans is problematic in their region and they questioned the assertion that it would result in increased efficiency. There was a concern about loss of salmon dollars for salmon projects. Section "F" was deemed a problem for one Lead Entity in the Columbia Basin.

The Lead Entity operational contracts for the Upper Columbia (Chelan County and Okanogan County/Colville Tribe) have been unresolved since July. WDFW and IAC are interested in improving efficiencies for the Upper Columbia, thereby, reducing the contract amounts. Okanogan County and the Colville Tribe have sent a letter to the Department opposing this action. A meeting is proposed for December 2nd in Olympia (coinciding with the SRFB meeting) to reach a resolution.

Olympic Pipe Line NRDA and Restoration Consent Decree Approved by Bankruptcy Court Judge: The judge presiding over the Olympic Pipe Line (OPL) bankruptcy case signed the NRDA consent decree and the order directing deposit of damage assessment and restoration funds in the Registry of the Court. Under this agreement, OPL and its insurers will complete transfer of a 9-acre parcel of property to the City of Bellingham and deposit just over 7 million dollars into the account. These funds will be used to implement restoration projects identified by the Trustees following the June 10, 1999, gasoline spill into Whatcom Creek in Bellingham. This settlement also includes funding for project monitoring and maintenance and for Trustee oversight. The responsible parties and the insurers now have 30 days to complete the transfer of property and funds to the court account.

Fish Passage Barriers: SSHIAP staff completed the 2004 estimate of repaired fish passage barriers in Washington. We estimate that 312 fish passage projects, opening 314 miles of habitat, have been permitted this year.

Kitsap County Alternative Futures Watershed Academy Training: WDFW co-led Watershed Academy workshops. The Watershed Academy is a program that trains citizens and community representatives to participate in Alternative Futures planning. Kitsap County is integrating Alternative Futures planning with sub-area planning for the contributing watersheds of Dyes Inlet.

1418 Tide Gate Task Force: The 1418 technical team through a contract with Dr. Greg Hood (Skagit River System Coop) has provided the task force with an assessment of 10 lowland areas south of LaConner in Skagit County for their estuary restoration potential. Approximately 1,238 acres of public land (primarily WDFW land) and 920 acres of private land were evaluated. Based

on preliminary estimates developed by the Skagit River System Coop and NOAA Fisheries, the task force anticipates that more than 2,000 acres of new estuary habitat will be necessary to recover Skagit River Chinook and that restoration of public lands alone will not achieve that objective.

The agriculture representatives on the Task Force have been adamant that public lands should be restored before private lands are restored. WDFW should anticipate significant pressure from the Task Force and the agriculture community to restore public lands first. If WDFW does not affirm our commitment to salmon recovery in the Skagit River through aggressive estuary restoration on WDFW land, the farm community might see WDFW's hesitation and reluctance as a sign that salmon recovery is not important and might use it as an excuse to resist and avoid estuary restoration on private land. The 1418 Task Force will be completing their work by the end of January 2005.

Low Land Stream Regulatory Clarification and Permit Efficiency: In response to the agriculture community's recent resistance to apply for and secure Hydraulic Project Approvals for work in lowland watercourses, Mike Bireley, Brian Williams and Bob Everitt are working with tribal and agriculture representatives to develop Drainage Management Plans for each of the individual drainage districts in Skagit County. The drainage management plans will hopefully accomplish the following:

Prioritize the historic natural watercourses that have been altered based on documented fish utilization.

Identify opportunities to provide permit efficiencies for the historic natural watercourses that have been altered but that do not support documented fish use.

Develop individual fish and drainage management strategies for the historic natural watercourses that have been altered and that support fish.

Washington State Non-point Management Plan: Habitat Program staff participated in a major revision of the statewide Non-point Management Plan, updating descriptions of WDFW activities connected with control of runoff and stream health. Prominent among the cited activities are the HPA Program, Aquatic Habitat Guidelines development and dissemination, and various salmon recovery activities, especially those connected with stream habitat restoration. The State Agency Non-point Management Workgroup, which oversees plan editing, is designated as a Class 1 committee by the Governor's Office.

North of Falcon 2005 - Scheduling: State and Northwest tribal representatives met to review progress of work plan tasks from our 2004 North of Falcon fisheries agreement. Discussions

included preliminary scheduling for the 2005 North of Falcon planning process and tentative dates have been defined for most of the major public meetings. A schedule of these meetings is expected to be available by December 1, 2004.

Selective Fisheries Planning: State and tribal representatives reviewed progress with development of the proposal for a chinook selective sport fishery, October 2005-April 2006, in Puget Sound. The proposal was presented initially for tribal technical review in early October and responses to questions stemming from that review have been provided to the tribes in preparation for presenting the proposal to the Pacific Salmon Commission's Selective Fisheries Evaluation Committee before the end of November. One of the important elements of the state-tribal discussions about any expansion of Puget Sound chinook selective fishing is the review of our two-year "pilot" chinook selective fishery that occurred in Areas 5&6 during July and August of 2003 and 2004.

We have committed to providing the tribes with a first draft of that review by December 1st and expect to hold technical and policy meetings about that review prior to the end of January 2005.

MINIMIZE ADVERSE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND WILDLIFE.

Bear Problem in Darrington: Officers Maurstad and Oosterwyk did an excellent job in resolving a particularly difficult problem bear situation in Darrington. Over the past several weeks, a large black bear took up residence on school property in downtown Darrington. It lost its fear of humans and would feed nightly on garbage left out in neighborhood garbage cans and canisters. Additionally, the bear was injured and only walking on three legs. Because of its close proximity to the school grounds and school trail system, the bear was immediately classified as a public safety threat and after considering all of our available options, euthanasia was our preferred resolution. As usual, this caught the attention of the media and Captain Hebner provided a television interview to Q-13 explaining the dilemma. After a couple weeks of intensive and unsuccessful live trapping efforts, the officers were finally able to use hounds late one evening and lethally removed the bear from the area. The carcass was transferred to Wildlife Biologist Rocky Spencer, who examined the bear and discovered the bear's molars were worn down to almost nothing and the large male's age was estimated at about 19 years. Captain Hebner and the Darrington mayor have discussed public meetings where the Department can provide information and education on garbage management in this rural community to reduce or eliminate similar problems in the future.

GOAL II: SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES
PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND
COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES COMPATIBLE WITH MAINTAINING HEALTHY FISH
AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HABITATS.

Pilot Cougar Hunting Season Program: The northeastern Washington Pilot Cougar Hunting Season Program special permit packets have been mailed to all hunters who were selected. Each packet includes a "Species Identification Training and Hound Handler Form" that needs to be signed by the hunter, postmarked by November 26th and returned WDFW in order for their permit to be valid. All hunts start December 1, 2004 and end March 31, 2005.

WDFW-DNR Geoduck Management Assessment: The agencies are conducting a number of joint geoduck management evaluations in conjunction with legislative issues and mandates. In addition to evaluating the feasibility and management implications of geoduck culture on state-owned lands, an assessment of a different limited entry and/or individual quota model(s) for the non-treaty fishery is being completed in anticipation of continued legislative dialogue in this area. A draft report should be complete and available for review by Commissioner Sutherland and Director Koenings around mid-December 2004. The current model of management will be compared to alternative approaches, with particular emphasis on any differences in: 1) meeting biological objectives; and 2) magnitude and distribution of costs and economic benefits from the fishery. Morris Barker and Lisa Veneroso are WDFW contacts for this project.

WORK WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED.

Upper Columbia Steelhead Fishery: The closure of a section of the lower Methow River near Pateros for steelhead fishing appears to be working. This section was targeted by highly successful "catch & release" anglers last year, which resulted in prematurely expending allowable wild fish incidental impacts (hooking mortalities) granted by NOAA-Fisheries. This required WDFW to close the fishery in mid-December rather than continue through March. The closure of this area has dispersed the fishing effort and fewer wild fish are being caught and released. Conversely, more hatchery fish are being retained which is the object of the fishery. Staff believes we should be able to continue the fishery well into 2005 without using up the allowable impacts to wild fish rather than closing it in December, as we needed to last year.

Point Whitney Shellfish: Staff developed draft annual management plans for clams and oysters in Bivalve Regions 5 and 6 (Admiralty Inlet and Central Puget Sound). Staff has proposed trading the "state" clam share at Anna Smith Children's Park in Dyes Inlet to the Suquamish Tribe in exchange for an equal amount of clams at Illahee State Park. The Suquamish Tribe overharvested their share of clams at Anna Smith Park this year, unaware that it was a public beach, and so the traded share will not actually be harvested, but used as "payback" to the resource. Draft plans are currently being reviewed by tribes and DNR and should be completed by the end of December. Staff placed informational signs on the public beach at Broad Spit in Dabob Bay. This boat-access beach is open year-round, and typically experiences a lot of undersize clam and over-limit violations. The new signs inform harvesters of their daily limits

and minimum sizes. Staff is now updating the commercial crab landings on the agency web page twice weekly. Also being added is preseason shrimp information and links to the proposed shrimp regulations.

Staff met with Department of Natural Resources and Attorneys General Office to continue answering legal interrogatories in *US v. Washington* (defining a "natural bed" on private commercial growers land). Both the Tribes and commercial shellfish growers have now asked for a continuance in the deadline for legal interrogatories, which had been due December 10th. Growers and Tribes are currently involved in shellfish digging experiments to gather data for the trial, currently set for fall 2005.

Closure of Commercial Red Urchin Harvest in Management District 3: State and tribal managers convened a technical meeting to discuss the results of a 2004 joint (state and tribal) population survey of red sea urchins in Sea Urchin Management District 3 (the Port Angeles area). WDFW biologists presented information on the 2004 survey methods and results. The estimate of the vulnerable harvestable red urchin biomass from this seasons survey was approximately 60% lower than that of a survey completed in 2001 and approximately 84% lower than an estimate of biomass made in 1991. Based on this significant and continued decline, the co-managers collectively decided that a commercial harvest closure is necessary to avoid collapse of the fishery. Causes for the continued decline in the District 3 red urchin population are not entirely clear and the co-managers agreed to identify and implement measures of stock assessment that would indicate future stock recovery. Future stock assessment work will likely include continued joint red urchin biomass surveys in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, examining recruitment and stock recovery through collection of size-frequency data, and establishment of long-term monitoring sites. Members of the Sea Urchin Advisory Board Staff are currently being notifying of the closure, and full industry notification will be made in the near future.

Coastal Dungeness Crab: The Department has completed the majority of the pre-season planning process for the coastal Dungeness crab fishery. State Tribal negotiations are nearly complete and include favorable results from negotiations that began in early September. In an agreement reached with the states of California and Oregon, the start of the fishery north of Cape Falcon has been delayed for two weeks and will begin on December 15th . The two-week delay over the normal December 1st opening date is a result of poor crab condition and the need to meet the state obligations in sharing the harvest opportunity with the tribes. A letter to all licensed Washington coastal non-treaty crab fishers was mailed this week providing all the pertinent details. Although the pre-season planning process has been long and filled with uncertainty, Department staff worked closely with industry representatives and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that resulted in great cooperation and better decision-making.

IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF WASHINGTON BY PROVIDING DIVERSE, HIGH QUALITY RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Federal Budget, Good News: Good news was received when on November 20, 2004, the US Congress passed The Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Amendments Act of 2004 (S. 3014). This is legislation that will renew and expand federal efforts to combat harmful algal blooms (HAB's), a nationwide environmental problem that costs the U.S. economy tens of millions of dollars each year. WDFW has provided support for this legislation on several occasions, including staff testimony before the House Subcommittee on Environment and Technology at a March 2003 hearing.

Puget Sound Recreational Crab Advisory Board Meeting: Crab Managers from WDFW Regions 4 and 6, and IRM held a meeting with the Puget Sound Recreational Crab advisory board at the WDFW Mill Creek office on November 16th. Final harvest numbers for the 2004 fishing season were reviewed and discussed, including the overharvest of the recreational targets in Marine Areas 7, 8-1, 8-2, and 12. In attendance were non-advisory representatives from the Washington Chapter of the Recreational Fishery Alliance and the Northwest Marine Trade Association, both of whom expressed their objection to any regulatory changes in the sport crab seasons in 2005. Their intention is to seek an increased sport allocation through the Fish and Wildlife Commission process or legislative means.

Puget Sound Fall Chum Salmon: Overall, the Puget Sound chum run was much stronger than expected. A record non-treaty catch of nearly 1.2 million chum with an ex-vessel (amount paid to fishers) value probably exceeding \$3 million has provided a boon to commercial salmon fishermen this year.

Lower Columbia River Fall Fisheries: Fall fisheries in the lower Columbia River are nearly complete. Commercial fisheries concluded at the end of October and sport fisheries have slowed to where effort for salmon is minimal.

The lower Columbia River sport fishery, which extends from the lower boundary at the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to Bonneville Dam, is currently open for salmon and steelhead through the end of the year. This fishery produced and total positive economic impact of \$11.5 million to the State's economy.

The Buoy 10 sport fishery extends from the mouth of the Columbia River at Buoy 10 upstream to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point boundary line and was open for chinook salmon during August 1st through September 5th and will remain open for coho and steelhead through the end of the year.

Season totals included landings of 41,000 chinook, 66,400 coho and 5,600 white sturgeon. The chinook catch was the second largest since 1990 and was similar to the 2003 total of 58,400. Coho catch was similar to the poor return years of 1999, 2000, and 2002 when catches ranged between 57,600-110,400. Fall commercial fisheries produced a total positive economic impact of \$1.9 million to the State's economy.

Commercial fisheries targeting pen-reared hatchery fish occurred in select areas in both Oregon and Washington. Seasons for select area sites occurred from late August through the end of October. The Deep River fishery produced catches of 400 chinook and 5,500 coho and resulted in a total positive economic impact of \$50,000 to the State's economy.

GOAL III: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RECONNECT WITH THOSE INTERESTED IN WASHINGTON'S FISH AND WILDLIFE.

Abalone Workshop: Staff gave a presentation on the current status of pinto abalone in Washington at a workshop on Orcas Island attended by researchers, educators, NGO representatives and private citizens. The workshop was funded by Washington Sea Grant, and the highlighted cooperative work is being done by WDFW, University of Washington, Taylor Shellfish and the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to estimate abalone abundance, examine abalone ecology, and develop methods which may be used to support recovery in the existing population.

Steelhead Summit 5: Representatives of citizen groups from throughout the west coast interested in steelhead attended the fifth Steelhead Summit in Bellevue on Saturday, November 6th. Staff from WDFW provided three presentations during the morning session. Amilee Wilson initiated the discussion with a presentation on SaSI and steelhead stock status, Curt Kraemer discussed the concepts of stock-production models and management reference points, and Jim Scott presented the structure and time frame for completing the Steelhead Science white paper. Preliminary agency thoughts on the process and time frame for completing a new steelhead management plan were also discussed. Participants in the Steelhead Summit provided numerous suggestions for improving the Steelhead Science and requested a workshop to discuss the draft when it becomes available.

Upland Game Advisory Committee: A total to 30 applications to the Upland Game Bird Advisory Committee were received from most parts of the state, with Spokane having the most with six applicants. Many of the applicants have the support of various conservation organizations (e.g., Pheasants Forever and the National Wild Turkey Federation), which will provide a good reporting outlet to other interested people. An internal committee is currently reviewing the applications and a list of recommended appointees will be provided to the Director in mid-December. Primary topics of discussion will be pheasant and turkey management; however, any emergent issue related to upland game animals will also be addressed.

Landowner Incentive Program Reminder: The current grant cycle for LIP projects is open until December 31st. Application forms and supporting information are available on the WDFW website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/lip>.

PROVIDE SOUND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF WDFW LANDS, FACILITIES AND ACCESS SITES.

Flooding Impacts - Region 4 Hatcheries: Most Region 4 hatcheries made it through last week's heavy rains in good shape. The following exceptions were the ones impacted:

Marblemount: A slide on Jordan Creek occurred in the middle of the night and the resulting silt plugged screens at the intake. The reduced flow going into the intake was enough to keep the alarms from going off; however, the reduced flows and resulting lower dissolved oxygen in two of the nine ponds resulted in the loss of approximately 40% of the steelhead in those ponds (70,000). The fish are currently being inventoried to determine loss. Samish: Friday Creek intake screen was damaged during the high water. The guild for that screen was bent and will require a boom truck to remove the screen. At the lower trap on Samish, the shear log was displaced and a tree fell across the fish ladder. The shear log needs to be placed back into position.

Arlington: Heavy rains caused a small slide at the spring's intake and will require removal of the gravel on top of the intake. No loss of fish or program.

NEW Region 1 Headquarters Building - Spokane: Construction on the new Region 1 Headquarters building jump-started in mid-July and hasn't slowed down since. Four months into the nine-month project and the concrete floor slab, the two-story masonry elevator shaft, the majority of the first and second floor steel frame, the first floor exterior framing, and the second floor steel decking are in place. The contractor hopes to start placement of the roof next week, which will provide a closed environment for the interior work. The concrete curbs and asphalt paving have been constructed and provide a clean construction site. Region 1 and Engineering staff are working together to coordinate furnishings in anticipation of a project completion date in the spring of 2005.

PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.

Presentations: Staff gave a presentation on stream hydrology and stream dynamics as part of a workshop "Streams and Salmon" put on by WSU Extension for their continuing education for real estate professionals. Al Wald has been invited to give a talk to the USGS Water Resources Division on a selected topic, probably "Flood Regimes and Flood Regions in WA". Staff is

preparing a poster presentation on "How Much Water is Ordinary High Water" for the WDFW all-hands meeting in April 2005.

Fatal Hunting Accident: A fatal hunting accident occurred in northern Stevens County on November 5th. Two adults and one ten-year-old were hunting the youth deer-hunting season on private timberlands. From our initial investigation it appears that a 28-year-old man shot his uncle mistaken him for a coyote. None of the hunters were wearing hunter orange. The victim was wearing tan pants with a camouflage jacket. Stevens County Sheriff's office has done the preliminary investigation. We will be following up. Sergeant Charron and Captain Whorton responded to the scene and initiated WDFW's investigation.

Fatal Heart Attack on the Humptulips River: Officer Alexander responded to a call about a fisherman having a heart attack on the Humptulips River. Officer Alexander arrived after the subject was pronounced dead by an EMT. Officers Alexander, James and Captain Brinson assisted the deceased's family with their boat and fishing equipment as well as removing the body from a gravel bar in the river. The subject had been fishing with his adult son when he died.

DEVELOP INFORMATION SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE AND COORDINATE DATA SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND INFORMATION.

Hydraulic Permit Management System (HPMS): The first design build of the HPMS is on schedule to be implemented as of November 22, 2004. This system should facilitate Hydraulic Project Approval issuance and accountability.

GoHunt Early Election Results: During the first week that GoHunt was activated on the Agency website there were approximately 1600 unique non-agency IP addresses that used the site. It appeared there were around 300 different non-agency users each day requesting GoHunt maps. We did not advertise or publish a news release, we just added a link to the web page to let people find and test the site on their own. We have now sent out personal email notices to selected constituents (n=200) and plan to send an Agency News Release to the media this week. Work continues on finalizing the water access site data for the GoHunt application. Staff is in the process of finalizing access site images and QA/QC of the facilities data. Staff from Olympia and eastside regional upland restoration staff met to collect data and map locations of lands enrolled in private lands access grant programs. Once we are caught up with the agreements that are in CAPS, we will include in the GoHunt application, and a GIS layer that summarizes by the total number of acres enrolled in the program for each township in eastern Washington.

RECRUIT, DEVELOP AND RETAIN A DIVERSE WORKFORCE WITH HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

Fish and Wildlife Officer Candidates: 21 out of 23 candidates passed the Physical Ability Test (PAT) on November 20th. Three were eliminated by failing the written exam administered the same day, which leaves us with 18 candidates to proceed to the next phase. The candidates are scheduled to come before an oral board in January.